C. Remarks

The claims are 15, 20 and 21, with claim 15 being the sole independent claim. Claims 16-19 and 22-24 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claim 15 has been amended to exclude rejected X groups. Claim 20 has been amended solely as to matters of form, and the change is unrelated to patentability. No new matter has been added. Reconsideration of the claims is expressly requested.

Applicants thank the Examiner for her indication that claim 17 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. In keeping with this indication of allowable subject matter, Applicants have amended claim 15 to limit it to the subject matter of allowable claim 17. Consequently, claim 15 and claims 20 and 21, which depend from claim 15, are seen to be in condition for allowance.

In the final Office Action, claims 15, 16 and 18-21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being allegedly obvious from U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2001/019782 A1 (Igarashi). Claims 22-24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being allegedly obvious from U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0034656 A1 (Thompson). Since claims 16-19 and 22-24 have been cancelled, and the remaining claims are seen to be in condition for allowance for the reasons noted above, these rejections should be withdrawn.

The foregoing actions have been taken without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter, and without conceding correctness of the rejections, but rather strictly to obtain an earlier allowance and to expedite issuance. In particular, it is Applicants' current intention to file a divisional application, to pursue the subject matter of the rejected claims.

Wherefore, Applicants respectfully request that the claims be allowed and the present case be passed to issue.

This Amendment should be entered, because it fully complies with the requirements set forth in 37 C.F.R. § 1.116. No new search or consideration is required.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our New York office by telephone at (212) 218-2100. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our address given below.

Respectfully submitted,



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